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Notes of the Month.

These notes are written at a time of great general tension, when the mightiest struggle of the war is being waged. The lives of many of our gallant men are at stake, and our own feelings are deeply concerned in the issue of events. We can only hope and pray that those who are so strenuously and self-sacrificingly opposing the German advance may be confirmed in their highest ideals of duty and be strengthened to stand—and having done all, to stand. A successful resistance at this stage is bound to have a decisive influence upon the war, and will undoubtedly hasten the coming of the end. Our confidence in our forces was never greater than it is, and those who are dismayed at the turn of events in the early stages of the struggle should not easily yield to disappointment or despair. Again and again in our imperial annals our troops have been tried and not found wanting. Let us still believe that the old spirit survives, and will vindicate itself in fullest measure. In the meantime, we, who can only stand and wait while others contend to the uttermost, should put a cheerful courage on and do all that in us lies to make the home reinforcements strong and serene and sustained. May God grant us his aid and give victory to our cause!

* *

A notable Churchman has recently passed away in the person of Canon Henry Scott Holland. For many years he was one of the foremost preachers in the Church of England, and did splendid service in the cause of practical Christianity. Believing whole-heartedly in the social message of the Christian Church, he identified himself years ago with the endeavour of the Christian Social Union to apply Christian principles to the problems of present-day life. The objects for which that Union exists are these:—(1) To claim for the Christian law the ultimate authority to rule social practice; (2) to study in common how to apply the moral truths and principles of Christianity to the social and economic difficulties of the present time; (3) to present Christ in practical life as the living Master and King, the Enemy of wrong and selfishness, the Power of righteousness and love. Of Canon Scott Holland it may be said that he never lost sight of those objects, but with unwearied zeal applied the resources of a rich culture and a lovable personality to the proclamation of the Christian Gospel.

A Thought for the Month

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO DEMOCRACY.

"And the common people heard him gladly."—Mark xii. 37.

"The religion which has had its message for all phases of the political life of Christendom has still, possibly in enhanced degree, its old, yet ever new, message to Democracy. It is not simply because the type can find entrance at doors, at which precept, definition, analysis, argument might knock long and in vain; nor that the life of the carpenter's Son, whose earliest disciples were fishermen, has, through all the ages, had a strange power to make the humble great and the great humble. It is because also, through this type, there is revealed to the human heart and conscience a nobler idea of the possibilities, and of the worth, of man. 'It is recorded of one of the world's gifted painters,' says Frederick Robertson, 'that he stood before the masterpiece of the great genius of his age—one which he could never hope to equal, or even to rival—and yet the infinite superiority, so far from crushing him, only elevated his feelings; for he saw realised those conceptions which had floated before him, dim and unsubstantial; in every line and touch he felt a spirit immeasurably superior, yet kindred, and is reported to have exclaimed, with dignified humility, "And I, too, am a painter!"'

It is not otherwise with the central Life of Christendom, or, indeed, with greatness and nobility in any life. In the aspirations with which the spectacle of such lives has so often filled men there is more than

> 'The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow.'

There is that which brings a reverent confidence that, even in obscure and common men, there are possibilities which await the strong summons of the slowly coming day of a better, because a more spiritual, Democracy.

> 'Wherefore did I contrive for thee that ear
> Hungry for music, and direct thine eye
> To where I hold a seven-stringed instrument
> Unless I meant thee to beseech me play?'"

"The Ethics of Citizenship," by Prof. John Maccunn.

PROGRESS THROUGH EXPERIENCE.

BY G. V. C.

A Church whose watchword is progress can never declare *ne plus ultra* of theological speculation. Hence to hint of any form of faith, however simple and pure, as the final goal in which religious thought must end, and to inscribe the word "Progress" as the motto of those who uphold it, has the appearance of the incongruity of trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. If anyone wishes to discover the beliefs of a progressive denomination like the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland he must find—not its present *position*—but rather the *direction* of its theological movement. "Dr. Martineau and Mr. Armstrong" (both ministered in their early years in Ireland), "while evincing the utmost veneration for Jesus, came ultimately to believe that the story of Jesus is only a highly fortunate episode in the religious history of the world, but by no means an indispensable one." Will future thought in our denomination confirm this view, or otherwise? The subjects of sin, penitence, and pardon are becoming infrequent topics of our pulpit discourses, and why? The problem of evil, while strong, perhaps, in its appeal to the head, has lost its appeal to the heart, and the Immortal Hope is becoming a dim conjecture. Is there any path of intellectual development by which the lover of truth may re-discover these and other kindred truths and add them to the treasury of our pulpit ministrations? If not, *our* future does look dismal. So pessimistic was the last Forward Movement Committee meeting that you might sum up its feelings

as to the future of our Church—"Abandon hope all who enter here." Certainly the glory of Unitarianism is that it makes allowance for individual differentiation, and its mission is to regenerate the faith and through the faith the morals of the world. But let us not dream that denial or disbelief of fundamental propositions spells progress. We ought to take heed to Stopford Brooke's warning—Ireland's finest gift to our household of faith—"Ought we not to clearly confess some ideas as absolutely true for *us*, and which the world will clearly understand are held by our ministers and the bulk of their congregations. For until such a general confession is made and understood we have no bond of union; we are merely unrelated pebbles, rolling over and over one another on the shore of uncertainty. We have no right to the name of a Church, and nothing whatever of its reality; we have no emotion behind us wherewith to move the world to action such as comes from infinite ideas deeply loved and clearly believed; we have drifted into having no clear ideas on religion held by all and incumbent on all, and who therefore speak with no clear voice to the world around us, and are losing, instead of gaining, adherents, having lost passion in religion, and cling (as all losing causes do) desperately to their past when their beliefs were vivid and effectual, but whose present is gloomy and whose future is uncertain. Nor shall we escape this fate unless we make ourselves into a church or a body of men—I care not for the word used—which professes faith in fundamental conceptions which it considers of the essence of a religion, which, capable of infinite development, are yet themselves believed and loved as part of eternal truth."

While we are deeply grateful to men like Dr. Martineau and Mr. Aimstrong for their immense personal influence over our thought and life, we have to admit that we cannot follow them in their attitude towards Jesus; and, further, are convinced that if their position towards Jesus was held by our people as a whole it would inevitably lead to the decline of our devotional life. It can easily be said in reply that any attempt at a detailed and dogmatic definition of the teachings of Christianity, especially if acceptance of it was made a test of church membership, would be largely rejected; we want freedom and an open vista. But what if the open vista should lead us to feel—I am not sure that God exists, I do not know that He is my Father, I am uncertain of a spiritual world, I doubt whether self-forgetful love is eternal life, I have almost given up belief in the hereafter, etc., such a person may be called an agnostic, a humanitarian, or an ethical teacher, but ought he to be a member or minister in a religious or Christian Church? It is depth of religious reality that is our greatest need to-day—a modern John Wesley to bring "Christianity in earnest" into all our homes. A heart-felt religion—"I felt my heart strangely warmed"—was the key to all Wesley's power; and, though science and criticism have enlightened and cleared away much of the theological dust since that ever-to-be remembered red-letter day for the world, when Wesley's heart was strangely warmed—the future of the Christian Church, and *our* future, as part of that Church is radiant with hope *if* true to the vision—God whispers—

> "I will leave man to make the fateful guess,
> Will leave him torn between the No and Yes,
> Leave him in tragic loneliness to choose
> With all in life to win or all to lose."

While the atheist cries—

> "There is no God; who tells me that this span
> Of petty pain and pleasure is controlled
> By other than the whim-led will of man,
> He must be blind or fool. I cannot hold
> Your dreamer's notion of a guiding hand;
> There is no God whom I can understand."

The agnostic answers—

> "I do not know; there may be One above
> Who sees the strange enigma of our life,
> And wisely holds its key—perhaps in love—
> Who overrules our struggle, knows our strife;

But it is all conjecture still to me ;
I will believe when I can clearly see.

But we of the conquering Christian Church can always sing—

" I know whom I believe. The questions rise—
The problems are not few—but I have seen
The Vision far transcending all surmise—
A Love that plans, a Strength on which I lean ;
My Father rules, for faith has told me so.
I know Him whom I have believed—I KNOW.

PENSIONS FOR MOTHERS.

On Wednesday, February 27th, an address was given to the Unity Guild by Miss Dora Mellone, Hon. Organiser Women's Political League, on the question of provision for necessitous mothers. The chair was taken by the Rev. J. A. Kelly. In his introductory remarks the chairman referred to the inadequate provision under the present Poor Law for those women deprived by death of their chief support, and expressed his belief that reform in this direction was necessary for the well-being of the community.

Miss Mellone explained that the present appeal for an extension of out-door relief to necessitous mothers was only part of an agitation for some system of Mothers' Pensions in Ireland, on the lines of that carried out so successfully in America. This could not be done without Parliamentary action, and would, therefore, involve delay. Accordingly, an effort was being made to secure some improvement at once under the present Poor Law. The practice of Poor Law Guardians varied all over the country. Hardly any two Unions adopted the same method. This delightful variety of administration is due to the fact that the various Poor Law Acts contain no direction as to amount of outdoor relief to be given. It is simply stated that adequate relief should be extended to the destitute widow with more than one child. In pre-war days it might roughly be said that the amount of outdoor relief given to widows with two or more children averaged a penny a day, for the whole country. The present day average in the Belfast Union is twopence a day, and this is given in the form of an order for groceries and coal. The scale has been raised several times since the rise in prices, and the amounts vary greatly, but roughly this may be said to be the average. For instance, a young widow with three children, suffering from varicose vein, earns about 5/- a week by clipping, receives 4/5 a week from an orphan society, and 10/- a week in outdoor relief, making the total income 19/5 for three children and an adult. Another woman, whose husband is totally incapacitated, with four children, youngest four months, has a total weekly income of 23/-, this including the 10/- outdoor relief. These are not specially hard cases ; they are chosen as fairly typical.

Of course the Guardians do not expect women and children to live on a grant averaging twopence a day. What they do expect is, that the mother shall go out to work, pay someone else to look after the children, if she can earn enough to do so ; if not, the children may run the streets in all weathers. Very often the woman will be able to earn about 17/- to 20/- a week. If there are three children, this amount will be made up to about 25/-, or perhaps a little more, if there are some special reasons. But in all cases, if the mother can work, it is held that she should do so. The care of the children is not her most urgent care, nor is the home her proper sphere. She must turn bread winner, and the children be left to chance care, or none, lest rates rise, and " the poor be pauperised."

The results of uncared-for children running the streets, and of children forced by hunger to sell papers or run messages, have been so ably dealt with in the columns of the " Non-Subscribing Presbyterian " by Mr. Shannon Millin that the points need not be emphasised again.

A tragic comment is supplied by the figures for infant mortality for February, 1918, which stand at 173 deaths for every 1,000 births, higher than Dublin, which is only 148 for every thousand births, when it is remem-

bered that such figures are an index to the sickness rate, and reveal what an amount of child suffering there exists in the "most prosperous industrial centre in Ireland."

The immediate remedy is to give a far more generous interpretation to the word "adequate" in the Act, and give these widows sufficient relief where the children are young for them to remain at home and care for their own babies. This would not be an intolerable addition to the rates, and would mean less unemployment, since the women would be taken out of an over-crowded labour market—mills are working on short time in very many cases—and would save the children from being forced into blind alley occupations by sheer hunger. Like other reforms, it would prove the truest economy in the end, and would be mere justice to a very helpless and very pitiful class. It is not well for the nation or the city which refuses to heed the cry of the widow and the fatherless.

An interesting discussion followed, in which the opinion was expressed that if the facts were known, public opinion would support an increase of relief in the direction suggested by the speaker.

In acknowledging a vote of thanks, Miss Mellone urged that all present should help to create a public opinion which would demand increase of help from those most dependent, who could in no way enforce the giving of such help themselves.

B.E.F. IN EAST AFRICA.

(Continued.)

Many of the Swahilis are Mohammedans, among whom the elder is a prominent and a much revered person. It is he who conducts their religious services, and acts very much like the elders in old Israel, as judge, peacemaker, and father of the village. The Mohammedan Swahili women attend services too, but as dumb hearers. Their dresses are rather striking, of brilliant hues, fashioned after a peculiar style of their own, which does not change, as in northern latitudes. Their dress stuff is something like the English print, of many colours, and that, with the addition of laces and fringes of Indian manufacture, is wound round the body many times, and over one shoulder. Their heads and feet are bare. Their ears are unique in their ugliness, owing to the fact that they are pierced, and the holes made in the lobes are continually enlarged from early childhood, till they attain a diameter of three inches, and large enough to hold a condensed milk tin. Whenever one has no ornament to put into these holes, the lobes hang loosely, reaching down to the shoulders. This characterises both sexes; but the ladies go one point further: they fix a precious stone or a gem of some kind in their left nostril.

In their habits they are not altogether cleanly. Spitting, which is looked upon as an abominable habit in civilised countries, is a sign of great respect, and "the thing" in society among the Swahilis. When walking, they never walk abreast, but in Indian file, with about two yards between each man. The women may be seen in a string of about a dozen, carrying water on their shoulders or on their heads, talking and spitting through their splendid teeth. Many a one I have seen with a child bound to her back, its head covered with thick curls, and its little legs dangling.

Perhaps you may think that the Swahili women, who have all the work to do, should rise and claim their rights, and make the men do the rough work; but on the other hand, they are far stronger and more robust than the men folk, who are much smaller in size, and inferior in physique, and no better then mere boys in comparison. The women are much taller, and possess broad, powerful shoulders, and other indications of strength. There is one point in particular about these people worthy of note, and rather interesting. Whenever one of them goes on a long journey, which means walking for any number of days through strange places and among strangers, he is sure of wel-

come and hospitality, whatever krall he comes to at night and hopes to rest in till morning. Though an utter stranger to the place and to his host, no one asks him any questions about his name, family, native locality, business, or his destination; neither does he, on the other hand, offer any enlightenment on any of those points. On arriving and on leaving, he and the host shake hands. They begin the hand shaking just as we do, but they finish with flourishes of their own style, with interlocking their thumbs, and shake three times.

The Swahilis and the Kikyuyus differ a great deal in their treatment of the dead. Among the former there are no funeral processions, and the gathering of friends and acquaintances, as in our country; neither is it customary to keep a corpse for two or three days, for the climate is too hot; nor is the corpse placed in a coffin, though timber is everywhere plentiful. However, the corpse, bound in a blanket, is carried on a trestle, and the grave is dug and formed very much in the same way as in our country; but when the relatives have excavated to the required depth, they turn and dig under one of the sides, and there the body is laid to rest—that is to say, the body is not laid to rest at the bottom of the grave, but under one of the sides.

When the grave is ready, two or three of the relatives descend into it to receive the body, and lay it in its proper place; then two or three layers of boughs and twigs are spread over the bottom of the grave, covering the side under which the body rests, so as to prevent any soil from touching the corpse, and when that is carefully done, the mourners replace the soil. Having completed that task, the eldest mourner gives every one present a drink of the water he has brought with him, and what is left of it is poured on the grave; and the idea of that is, that it quenches the thirst of the departed. Should a white man, or any non-Swahili happen to be in view or near them when burying their dead, they would immediately camouflage the grave, so that their proceedings would not be seen. The Kikyuyu show very little respect for their dead, and no mercy to the dying. When a member of that tribe is about to die, he is removed by the family to the jungle, where a fire is lighted, and more firewood is gathered in order to keep the fire going until the sick person dies. When the fire has been well started, and a quantity of fuel has been heaped on top of it to the family's satisfaction, they then waste no more time by waiting on the patient to breathe his last; they go home and leave him in the wilds, to be devoured by vultures and wild animals.

Having spent six weeks in Moshi, we were ordered to move, and after a day's journey, we came to a place of the name of River Ruru, from whence we were conveying stores and food through a country absolutely devoid of anything like a road. We had to cut and hack a way for our motors. Occasionally it took us a week to travel 150 miles. Rough, jolting journeys of this kind took the life out of our strongest motors, and accounted for many a breakdown. In rough country and oozy swamps, where conditions were most trying, the heavy British type of motor, however well built, failed, and we had to use the "jiggers," (Ford motors), which had the advantage of being lighter, as well as possessing most reliable engines. It was a common thing to see broken down motors here and there, lying where they had broken down, waiting for weeks for repairs, and their drivers depending on passing convoys for food, which they varied by guinea fowl, which they shot in the woods. A journey through this region was most trying to motors, and certainly dangerous to a white man's health, owing to the scarcity of drinkable water, and owing to clouds of mosquitoes that buzzed about and punctured our faces, in consequence of which we soon got covered with red pimples, and in seven days' time we got fever.

(To be continued).

KILLED IN ACTION.

SECOND-LIEUTENANT THOMAS HENDERSON.

In August last Second-Lieutenant Thomas Henderson, Royal Irish Rifles, was reported "missing." For months his relatives and friends have hoped to hear from him or of him alive and well, a prisoner of war. It is with deep regret that we have seen the official intimation of his death, "killed in action." Thomas Henderson was born November 5th, 1886, and was the son of the late George G. Henderson and Mrs. Henderson, of Craigtara, Holywood. From his earliest years he was closely associated with our Sunday School and church at Holywood, and when shortly before the outbreak of the war he went to reside in Glasgow, he at once joined the St. Vincent Street Church there, and won many friends by his genial and enthusiastic nature. At the beginning of the war he did not wait to receive a commission, but at once enlisted in the ranks, and proved his worth by being quickly promoted to sergeant, and afterwards receiving his commission. He joined up from a deep sense of duty, and threw himself into his new work with characteristic zeal. He was an efficient officer, a brave soldier. In October, 1916, he married Miss Lucia Traill Smellie, youngest daughter of Mr. James Smellie, Glasgow. On the Sunday after the official announcement of his death, Rev. G. L. Phelps made a feeling reference to the sad event at our service at

Holywood, dwelling especially on his manly disposition, his uprightness, his kindliness, his attachment to his home, and his devotion to his Church. He had endeared himself to a wide circle of friends who mourn his loss and cherish his memory. Thomas Henderson has three brothers at present serving in the armies of the Allies—Captain John M. Henderson, in Salonica; George Henderson, still in Ireland with the Royal Irish Rifles; and Charles Henderson, in the United States Army. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow, his mother, his sisters and brothers.

In Memoriam.

MRS. JOHN BARRON.

The friends of the Rev. J. Barron will be sorry to learn of the sudden death of Mrs Barron, on Wednesday, March 6th. Her body was found on the sands near the Manse, at Ballyobegan, Barony of Lower Ards, Co. Down, about mid-day on the date mentioned. Mrs. Barron, over a year ago, passed through a very critical illness, which involved treatment in a nursing home, under the supervision of a specialist. Her health very much improved, but she never quite recovered. In the districts, in the north and south of England, as well as in Ireland, where she was known, the good work she did made a deep and lasting impression. The funeral took place on Saturday, March 9th, at the Meeting House, Ballyhemlin. The Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A., and the Rev. J. J. Magill, B.A., officiated. The Rev. R. Maxwell King was organist. There was a large attendance of local clergy and friends of various denominations.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Instruction prepared by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I. for 1918.

April 7th, Review.

April 14th. THE GOSPEL AMONG THE GENTILES.—*Peter amongst the Gentiles.* Read Acts xi. 1–18. Key text, Galatians iii. 28.

Introduction.—As we shall see later, St. Paul was the apostle specially dedicated for work amongst the Gentiles. The other apostles wished to limit the Gospel to the Jews, and only by force of circumstances extended it to the Gentiles. This story shows how the chief apostle, Peter, learnt that Christianity is for all. In chapter x. we read how he went and baptized the Roman officer, Cornelius, and in the present lesson he tells the story in order to defend himself against the narrow-minded Christians.

I. *Cornelius.*—In chapter x., verse 4, we learn that the chief reason why Peter was sent to him was that he had already proved himself a Christian by his good deeds. Many folk foolishly think, if only they come to church or Sunday School, learn a few lessons from the Bible, and *call* themselves Christians, that this makes them Christians. Nothing of the sort. Christ is not in our hearts unless we do Christlike deeds and speak Christlike words. Take, for instance, the poem "Abou ben Adhem," which tells us how Abou saw an angel in a dream, with a book in which were written the names of those who loved God. Abou said that his chief desire was to love and serve his fellowmen, and then he found that his name was first on the list.

II. *Peter's Vision.*—The Jews were narrow in many things. (So are most people, but we are all inclined rather to see the mote in other people's eyes than the beam in our own eyes.) The Jews would not eat certain kinds of foods (*e.g.* pork), calling them unclean. But in his vision Peter saw all kinds of food mixed together, and learnt that what God had blessed, man must not call unclean. The reference, of course, was to Cornelius, whom the Jews would call unclean because he was a foreigner. God meant Peter to learn that Cornelius was blessed because he was a good man, and therefore as much entitled to be called a Christian as anyone. We show the same narrow-

ness as the Jews when we employ such wicked phrases as "dirty nigger," "dirty foreigner," "yellow peril," etc.

III. *God is no respecter of persons.*—God has no favourites, except such as try to do His will. All men are His children, and, if we do our best, all are equally dear to Him. Christianity teaches that we shall find brothers all the world over. *Read the key text.* St. Francis of Assisi showed himself a true Christian because he was ready to love and help every human being. There is a charming story of how he went to preach the Gospel among the Saracens at a time when Christians and Saracens hated each other like poison, and when any Christian ran the risk of death if he went among the Saracens. But when the Saracens saw that St. Francis came to them like a brother, they did him no harm, and many were converted.

April 21st. *Saul's First Missionary Work.* Read Acts xi. 19–26. Key text, Acts xix. 26.

Introduction.—The key text gives an excellent summary of the work done by St. Paul (Saul). He went throughout Asia (and later on to Europe), turning people from the worship of images, and preaching the one true God as revealed in the beautiful life and noble death of Jesus Christ.

I. *The Gospel in Antioch.*—The early Christian preachers in Antioch had endeavoured to keep the Gospel for the Jews alone (verse 19), but the spirit of Christ refused to be so restricted. Men of other races heard of the Gospel, and realized that it was meant for them also. For instance, there were men from the Island of Cyprus, and even from distant Cyrene, in Africa, who had turned to Jesus as their Lord, and some of them came to Antioch (which is an important town near the sea, north of Palestine), and began to preach to all sorts and conditions of men. Thus the seed scattered by persecution returns with much fruit.

II *Barnabas.*—The chief apostles (especially after Peter's experience with Cornelius) saw that they must admit these Gentiles, so they appointed Barnabas (who was himself a native of Cyprus) as missionary. His large-hearted Christianity was badly needed.

III. *Saul.*—But Barnabas knew that he himself was no great preacher, and his thoughts turned to that fiery Jew, Saul, who, since his conversion, had been living in his native town of Tarsus. Tarsus was a town with a very mixed population, and Saul would have sympathy with the Gentiles. More than that, Saul was quite unlike the chief apostles, in that he had broken completely with Judaism, and had learnt *that Christianity was a new religion meant for all mankind.* Note that Saul had been waiting at Tarsus. Waiting for what? *His opportunity.* At first he was too much suspected to be of much use, so he went into retirement, meanwhile preparing himself for his opportunity when it came. The opportunity came at Antioch, and when Saul arrived he was fully prepared for his work. Two lessons:—(1) *Await our opportunity.* We can often spoil our good intentions by rushing too quickly at a thing; or again, if we are anxious, say, to do good, or to be brave, we get disheartened if no opportunity immediately comes, when our duty is to wait, and the opportunity will certainly come. Wellington won the battle of Waterloo by keeping his men in check until the right moment came for launching them against a disheartened enemy. So too, did Fabius Maximus, the great Roman General, save Rome, when all seemed to be lost. He had not got a very well trained army, whilst the enemy, under the great Hannibal, were well equipped. Therefore he kept on leading the enemy about and avoiding battle, until the enemy were disorganised and his own men trained. Then he struck successfully.

2. *Be prepared.* We shall miss our opportunity unless we are well prepared. Soldiers are drilled even when there is no war so as to be ready. The foolish virgins in the parable were not prepared for a long wait, and so their lamps went out because they had not brought enough oil. One of the saddest incidents in modern stories tells how a young man's life was ruined because his courage failed him at the critical

moment, owing to his not having prepared for danger. So, too, Peter denied Jesus because he was not prepared for the test he had to undergo. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are called upon to be like Saul, and be prepared for every opportunity of service that comes their way.

IV. *The name "Christians."* Is it not a splendid thought that the followers of Jesus should first have been called by the glorious name of Christians at Antioch, because it was there that for the first time it was made clear to all the world what sort of religion Christianity was, namely, a religion for *all mankind?*

April 28. SAUL (NOW PAUL) BEGINS HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. Read Acts xiii. 1–12. Key text, Acts xiii. 2.

General note on the travels of St. Paul. Every teacher ought to copy, on a large scale, the map of these travels, which is found in almost every Bible. This large map should be exhibited to the children each Sunday. At first no towns should be marked. But as St. Paul reaches each place its name and position should be clearly marked, and also a line showing the course of the journey. As there are three journeys, the track of each should be marked with a different coloured pencil or crayon.

Introduction.—The names "prophet" and "teacher" were applied to the Christian preachers. We can judge how quickly the new religion was spreading when we find that Manaen, the foster brother of King Herod, was one of the prophets and teachers. Saul and Barnabas were separated especially for the work of spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles, because the Holy Spirit, working in the hearts of the rest, revealed that they were the fittest to do this generous and gracious work. At that time there was grave need for a new religion, for practically the only powerful religion then was the worship of the Roman Emperor, and thus men's thoughts were fixed on an earthly king, when they needed to be told of a Heavenly Father who would bring them eternal joy and peace. Images of the Emperor were set up all over the Roman world, and in addition there were images of Diana. Aphrodite, and other pagan gods and goddesses. Men were no longer satisfied with this superstitious worship, and they were ready to hear about Jesus, who leads men to become the children of a living God.

I. *John, their attendant.*—Very probably he was John Mark, the reputed author of the Gospel according to St. Mark.

II. *Preaching in the Synagogues.* Paul preached in the synagogues for two reasons: (1) Because, until a Christian community had been formed, with places of meeting, the Jewish synagogue was the only public place for religious purposes where he could preach; (2) Because he wished to give the Jews every opportunity of hearing the Gospel. But folk, other than Jews, were present at the synagogue, and thus Paul could preach to all.

III. *Bar-Jesus and Sergius Paulus.* Evidently Sergius Paulus (the pro-Consul, that is, the chief magistrate of the Island of Cyprus) was a man who felt dissatisfied with the old superstitions, and was seeking light. Bar-Jesus (whose name means 'son of Jesus,' or Joshua, Jesus being quite a common name; what marks off our Lord is, that he was Jesus *the Christ*) was trying to satisfy Sergius with some quack religion of his own, and therefore did all he could to keep the pro-Consul from hearing Paul's gospel. But Paul's powerful spirit overcame the sorcerer, who was led away bewildered and blind, and thus, we trust, more ready to heed the truth which would restore his sight Sergius was a noble character, for, although so great a man, he humbled himself and learnt from the wandering missionaries, and found the light in Christ.

IV. *Saul, called Paul.*—Both names are really the same, Saul being the Hebrew form, and Paul the Roman. Evidently he employed the name Paul to show that his interests were now wider than ever.

V. *The places visited:*—

1. *Seleucia.*—An important sea-port on the Mediterranean Sea. The chief

port in Syria. There still exist two landing stages in the old harbour called Paul and Barnabas.

2. *Salamis of Cyprus.*—The chief city and port of this wealthy island. No doubt Paul and Barnabas went first to Cyprus, because Barnabas wished the Gospel to be preached to his fellow-countrymen.

3. *Paphos.*—Also a port in Cyprus, on the opposite side (the west) of the island to Salamis. This place was the seat of one of the most famous pagan religions of the day—the worship of Aphrodite. This religion appealed to all the baser passions of man, glorifying them with the name of love. Christianity, however, preached the love of God, and was thus in complete opposition to the base love of Aphrodite. It was at Paphos that Saul was first called Paul, and that the incident of Bar-Jesus and Sergius Paulus occurred.

E. H. P.

Reports.

The Editor begs to acknowledge receipt of verses bearing the title "His Dream." This communication is not accompanied by the name and address of the sender. All communications should be so authenticated.

* *

Unity Guild.—There was a marked development in the theatrical skill displayed in this year's dramatic performance compared to last year. This was evident, not only in a greatly improved quality of acting, but also in the choice of plays, in the staging, costumes, make-up, and scenery, all of which showed a determination to make the entertainment more effectual, and indicated a greater confidence on the part of the actors. The producers were well advised to again confine themselves to two short plays, but it was natural, after the success of last year, that the pieces selected were longer and of a more difficult character than those previously staged. One felt, moreover, as the evening progressed, that the actors became more at home in their work. This was particularly noticeable in the Rev. E. H. Pickering and Mr. H. Erskine, who each appeared in both plays. In "My Lord in Livery," the latter made an admirable old butler, and saved the opening of the play from the danger of falling flat; but it was not until he appeared as *Major Rattan* that he really let himself go. As the *Lord in Livery* Mr. Pickering had a difficult part to sustain, and he did not seem to enter into it with the same gusto that he put into the admirably made-up *Victor*, in the second play. Of course, it is impossible to give an account of these plays further than by saying that the first was a pleasant little comedy, and the other a farce, which sent the audience home in the best of tempers. It was a pity that so small a part as *Rose* fell to Misss L. Hill, as it gave but little scope for the powers she showed. Miss Neill, too, was worthy of something better than *Laura*. Miss F. Kennedy in the part of *Sybil* could scarcely be heard at the back of the hall, so a portion of the audience never succeeded in picking up the story of the play which it fell to her lot to explain. All were charmed with Master M. Webster as *Robert* the page, and Mr. T. B. M'Clure made a very good *Hopkins*. Nothing could have been better than Miss A. F. Montgomery's spirited performance of *Anna Maria* in "Ici on Parle Français,". The only pity is that she was not longer on the stage. Mr. R. Martin and Miss Shanks gave great pleasure by their acting of *Mr. and Mrs. Spriggins*, though if they had played up to each other a little more it would have helped. Miss Anderson had the uninteresting part of *Angelina*, their daughter, and she certainly did her best with it. Unfortunately Miss I. Campbell was suffering from a severe cold in the throat, but this did not prevent her from being heard quite distinctly. Her acting of *Julia* added considerably to the success of the evening. It is hoped that the Guild will continue to develop the histrionic powers of its members, and that a dramatic entertainment will become as much a fixture in the winter syllabus as Ladies' Night. We look

forward to seeing something even more ambitious next year. Why not a Costume Piece, with powder and patches?

* *

Ballycarry.—A very successful Social was held in the Schoolroom on Friday, February 15th, for members of choir and friends. Miss M'Kinstry gave a recitation and song. Songs were also given by Miss Hamilton, Messrs. Magowan, Erskine, Dickson, and a hornpipe by Miss Cissie Hay. Tea was served at 10 o'clock, preceded by a short address by the Minister, who spoke in eulogistic terms of the work of the choir in our church, their regular attendance both at church and at practice. Dancing to the accompaniment of charming music, supplied by the violins of Messrs. J. M'Kinstry, W. Hume, and J. Templeton, concluded the function.

* *

Banbridge.—The Young People's Guild connected with the above church were privileged to hear a delightful lecture given by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., of Belfast, on Tuesday, February 26th. His subject was "Patriotism and Poetry." Many thought that the lecturer would be tempted to deal with the poetry produced during the present war only, but he refreshed our minds by taking us away awhile from the atmosphere of the war. He showed us the idea of patriotism that prevailed in the times of Homer and Virgil as revealed in the "Iliad" and the "Aenid," from both of which he gave fitting quotations.

Mr. Rossington divided his subject into four periods or phases, but dealt chiefly with the age of Wordsworth, and explained that that age contained many features analogous with the present age. He illustrated his points with selections from Wordsworth's poems, pointing out that the true patriot is not blind to his country's faults, but, like Wordsworth, it is love of country that prompts him to raise his voice in condemnation of existing evils, and utter his burning appeal for higher ideals and a purer life. While Mr. Rossington gladly acknowledged and admired the courage born of patriotism which is prepared to fight on the battlefield and die for the fatherland, he pointed to a larger sphere of patriotism in which each man will love his own country, and endeavour to uplift it to a higher moral and spiritual plane, because the real strength and glory of any country is in the purity, truthfulness, and fine humanity of its people. A very hearty vote of thanks was passed to the lecturer, on the motion of Mr. S. Bell, seconded by Mr. J. M'Keown.

On Tuesday, March 5th, the second of a series of socials was held by the Guild. There was a large attendance of young people, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. Tea was dispensed by the ladies, and afterwards a programme of music and games was enjoyed. Duetts, solos, and recitations were given by Miss S. Shanks, Mr. S. P. Bell, and Rev. J. G. Davies. Mrs. Davies and Miss Caughey presided at the piano. The proceedings were brought to a close by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

On Friday, March 15th, the Annual Congregational Soiree was held in the Dunbar Memorial Schools. Tea was provided by the ladies of the congregation, which was much enjoyed. The programme of music which followed was contributed by Misses A. and S. Shields, H. and G. Stevenson, M. M'Keown, and Messrs. S. Shields, J. M'Keown, and R. M'Kee. Miss M. M'Kee presided at the piano. On the motion of Mr. D. Radcliffe, seconded by Mr. J. M'Keown, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to the providers of the tea, and to the artistes who contributed to the programme. The singing of the National Anthem ended the proceedings.

* *

Ballee.—Rev. E. Clarke, Strabane, acknowledges, with thanks, for the Syria and Palestine Relief Fund, collection at Ballee N.S. Presbyterian Church, per Rev. J. H. Bibby, £6.

An effort was also made to raise a contribution to the St. Dunstan Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors. An interesting illustrated lecture, entitled "A Night with Burns," was given in the

Schoolroom by Rev. R. Philipson, B.A., Downpatrick. Appropriate solos were rendered by several friends. About £12 was the amount resulting.

A pleasant evening's entertainment was enjoyed by a large company in the schoolroom, on Friday, 8th March. The proceeds, amounting to over £22, are to be devoted to school equipment.

* *

Belfast Domestic Mission.—The sixty-fifth annual meeting of the friends and subscribers to the Domestic Mission to the Poor of Belfast was held on Monday evening, March 4th, in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street. Rev. H. J. Rossington, B.D., occupied the chair, and there was a good attendance. The Chairman, having expressed regret at the absence, owing to illness, of Miss Charlotte Bruce, who had long acted as secretary, and of Miss Frances M'Tear, a strong and faithful supporter of the Mission, read the report of the committee, which expressed entire confidence in their missionary, Rev. F. Woolley. Mr. Hugh Erskine presented the report of the Provident Fund, which showed that the money from depositors during the year 1917 was £544, and, taking into account the amount of withdrawals, there was a sum of £13 1s. 7d. over the amount they owed to depositors. Mr. John M'Kenzie submitted the financial statement, which showed that there was an income of £504, and after all expenditure had been met, there was a debit balance of £14 7s. 5d. Rev. Mr. Woolley in his report said of their young men forty had joined the Army, and he was sorry to say that six had been killed and five wounded. Sickness had been prevalent, while he regretted that the drink toll was still sad. In point of numbers they had more than maintained their position. Over two hundred families were connected with the Mission, and he appealed for helpers. The Chairman, in moving that the reports and statement of accounts be printed and circulated among the subscribers, said the Mission was founded in 1853, and although in the duration of its life it was coming perilously near to the period of three score years and ten, it showed no slackness or decline in strength, except, perhaps, in the case of its finances. Rev. G. L. Phelps, seconding the motion, said no community could neglect its Christian duties. The resolution was adopted. On the motion of Mr. M'Kenzie, seconded by Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A., a motion was passed acknowledging the services of Mr. and Mrs. Woolley in the Mission work. A similar vote was passed to the voluntary helpers, especially Dr. Malcolm Brice Smyth, on the motion of Mr. Charles M'Kisack, seconded by Mr. M'Crum, and supported by the chairman. The members of the Committee of Management and the Ladies' Committee were re-elected, on the proposition of Rev. A. O. Ashworth, seconded by Mr. Wm. Hewitt.

* *

Clough.—Now when ministers and laymen are discussing, in the pages of the "Inquirer," the welfare of our churches, and the supply of ministers to equip them, it will be of interest to readers of the N.S.P. to know what is being done in the neighbourhood of Clough by our minister and his people. At the beginning of February evening services were commenced at Ballykilbeg Orange Hall, and so splendidly have they been attended up to date that there seems a distinct likelihood of their becoming firmly established. To summon together congregations averaging fifty adults, by the usual country channels, indicates a vigorous and inspiring religious interest, and we cannot in its presence refrain from wishing the minister and the friends that he gathers together for worship Sunday by Sunday such a success as will worthily crown their faith and efforts. M. W.

* *

Comber.—The annual meeting of the congregation was held on Wednesday evening, 6th March, when there was an excellent attendance of members and young people. A simple tea was served from 7-30–8, after which the minister took the chair, and the Committee's report and statement of accounts were read. These showed that the condition of the church was highly satisfactory. The average attendance at morning service during 1917 was

115, and at evening service, 77. The number of scholars on the roll of the Sunday School is 101. Reference was made to the fact that out of 30 men serving in the Forces, 6 have been wounded, and 8 have paid the supreme sacrifice. At the conclusion of the business proceedings, the minister presented 22 medals and 6 certificates to young people of the congregation for good attendance at church worship. A musical programme, organised by Mrs. Hugh Ferguson, was then presented, and was much appreciated by the audience. The following artistes contributed songs and recitations:—Mrs. Hugh Ferguson, Miss Creeny, Miss MacBain, Miss E. Ferguson, Miss A. Stewart, Miss S. Sloan. Mrs. R. Ferguson kindly accompanied at the piano. The pronouncement of the benediction brought a most enjoyable meeting to a close.

* *

Larne.—The time extending from February 22 till March 8 will long be remembered as a record in our history On the evening of the date first mentioned the annual business meeting of the congregation was held in the schoolroom, and was confined entirely to business matters. Committees for the ensuing year were appointed, and the annual reports of the secretary and treasurer were submitted, considered, and ordered for printing and distribution among members. The treasurer's statement of accounts showed a slight falling off in revenue, and owing to wild and wet weather, but our indefatigable official comforted all hearts, his own included, by being able to announce receipt of a handsome addition to capital owing to absorption of the Ulster Bank in the London Co. and Westminster Bank.

The business meeting was followed on the evening of 26th February by a very pleasant concert, in the usual place, which was filled by a large audience. Admission was by ticket, the proceeds to augment the Music Fund. At this entertainment members of the congregation were assisted by their friends, not belonging to our congregation, while most, if not all, the other denominations of the town were represented in the audience. The programme, etc., was duly announced in the "Larne Times."

* *

Templepatrick.—The Annual Meeting of the Old Presbyterian congregation of Templepatrick was held in the Roughfort School on Friday evening, the 8th March. There was a much larger attendance than usual, the young people in particular having come out in strength. As is customary, the proceedings commenced with tea, and notwithstanding the pressure exercised by the Food Controller, which was felt, and the fact that the good things were not quite so good as they used to be, we nevertheless enjoyed our tea and the happy gathering. After tea the minister—Rev. A. Turner—took the chair, and Mr. John B. Moore, secretary, presented the annual statement of accounts. These appeared to be satisfactory, and were ordered to be printed and circulated among the members of the congregation. At this meeting four members of the Church Committee retired, and four new members were elected to fill their places. The business aspect of the meeting having been disposed of, another and a very pleasant interest took possession of all present, for it was known that occasion would be taken to make Miss Getty the recipient of a presentation from the congregation. It was towards this event of the evening that all looked with feelings of interest and pleasure, for Miss Getty had worked for many years in the Sunday School, and as organist in the church, exercising always a happy and helpful influence, and by the way establishing herself in the affections of the young people especially. Miss Cassie Moore and Mrs. Robert Thompson, as representing the congregation, took their places on the platform, and Miss Getty was invited to a chair beside them. Miss Moore then in suitable words made the presentation, which consisted of a beautiful solid silver salver, with inscription, and a case of Treasury notes. The inscription on the salver runs as follows:—"Presented to Miss Mina Getty (in conjunction with a purse of sovereigns) by the members

of the Old Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting-house, Templepatrick, in recognition of her valuable services rendered in the Church and Sabbath School, 1918." Miss Getty, evidently touched by this beautiful and useful expression of the esteem in which she is held, made suitable reply, thanking them for their great kindness to her, and trusting that they might long be spared to work together in the same harmonious and happy way in which they had always worked. Complimentary speeches were made by Dr. Campbell, Messrs. A. Birkmyre, John Moore, Robert Thompson, and Rev. G. V. Crook. The proceedings were marked by great enthusiasm throughout. Subsequently the young people took the floor, and dancing was indulged in until the small hours. This meeting will long be remembered as a very pleasant and happy one.

MARRIAGE.

CAMPBELL—BIRKMYRE.—On Wednesday, 20th March, at the Old Presbyterian Meeting-house, Templepatrick, by the Rev. A. Turner, Archibald Campbell, Belfast, to Agnes Clara, daughter of Mr. A. Birkmyre, Glengormley, Belfast.

DEATHS.

BARRON.—On Wednesday, March 6th, 1918, at Ballyhemlin Manse, Ballywalter, Co. Down, Lucy Matilda, the wife of the Rev. John Barron. "Rest in the Eternal."

BELL.—March 14th, 1918, at "Avonview," Skegoniel Avenue, Belfast, Margaret, the dearly-beloved wife of John Bell. Interment took place in Templepatrick New Burying-ground on Sunday, 17th March.

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